



Product Owner – Digital Infrastructure

Digital Infrastructure

Team:	Digital Infrastructure	Location:	AKL/WLG/CHCH
Reports to:	Product Lead		
Role Type:	Permanent		

About Us

KiwiRail’s Role in Aotearoa, New Zealand

KiwiRail, a proud State-Owned Enterprise, delivers sustainable and inclusive growth for our customers, communities, and people.

For more than 150 years, rail in New Zealand has connected communities, delivered freight and passengers around the country, and showcased our spectacular scenery to the world. Our purpose—Hononga Whaikaha, Oranga mo Aotearoa (Stronger Connections, Better New Zealand)—speaks to connection with our customers and the future needs of their businesses, connection with the communities we serve and operate in, and connection with each other. KiwiRail is carrying this legacy into the future, delivering connected rail and shipping transport services that create economic, social, and environmental value for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

Our Workplace

At KiwiRail, our values define the behaviour we expect from everyone. We have a team of over 4500 people, and every connection we make with each other, our union partners, our customers and all our stakeholders must be of the highest standard.



Safety, health, and well-being are our number one priority, ensuring our people return home safe and healthy every day.

About the Role

Purpose of the role

KiwiRail is in a phase of significant transformation to modernise and grow our rail and Interislander ferry services in Aotearoa.

The infrastructure team maintain the rail network. Carrying out day to day activities across the country to keep our network smoothly running for freight customers and rail passengers.

This role is part of KiwiRail's Digital Infrastructure team, which focuses on enabling increases in productivity, improvements in safety, value for money spending and new ways of working by leveraging innovative technology

As the Product Owner responsible for driving both product vision and execution within for your allocated products within the infrastructure business. You'll be responsible for maximizing product value by defining features, managing priorities, and ensuring delivered solutions meet both user needs and business objectives. Working within an agile framework, you'll lead backlog management, sprint planning, and product decision-making while maintaining strong relationships across the organization. This role requires a balance of strategic thinking and hands-on execution to successfully guide products from concept through delivery.

The position combines business acumen, technical understanding, and strong stakeholder management to ensure our products deliver measurable value to our customers while advancing organizational goals. You'll be empowered to make critical decisions about product direction while collaborating closely with cross-functional teams to bring those decisions to life.

Key Accountabilities

Within the area of responsibility, this role is required to:

- Own and maintain the product vision and roadmap, ensuring alignment with business strategy and customer needs while actively gathering input from stakeholders and market research to inform product decisions.
- Manage and prioritize the product backlog effectively, writing clear user stories with acceptance criteria, and ensuring the development team always has a well-defined set of requirements to work on. This includes regular backlog refinement and prioritisation sessions.
- Lead sprint planning sessions and collaborate closely with development teams to establish sprint goals, clarify requirements, and make real-time decisions that keep work moving forward productively.
- Serve as the primary liaison between business stakeholders, ICT, and the development team (both internal and external), effectively communicating priorities, trade-offs, and technical constraints while building strong relationships across Infrastructure and the wider business.
- Define and track key product metrics and KPIs, using data-driven insights to make informed decisions about feature development and product direction while measuring the success of delivered features.
- Conduct regular product demos and reviews with stakeholders, gathering feedback and incorporating learnings into future development cycles while ensuring transparency about product progress.
- Create and maintain product documentation within the digital infrastructure knowledge base including user stories, feature specifications, process flows, and release notes, ensuring all stakeholders have access to current product information.
- Lead release cycles and coordinate with relevant teams to ensure successful product launches, including creating release plans and managing stakeholder communications.

Key challenges

- Balancing competing stakeholder demands and priorities while maintaining a focused product vision - this requires strong negotiation skills and the ability to say "no" to good ideas that don't align with current strategic objectives.
- Managing the tension between short-term fixes and long-term business objectives, particularly when technical debt, customer escalations, and strategic initiatives all demand immediate attention.

- Maintaining effective communication and alignment across diverse teams and stakeholders who have different perspectives, technical understanding, and priorities - especially challenging when working with both technical teams and business leadership.

Key Relationships Here are the key relationships relevant to this role		Manage /Lead	Deliver to	Collaborate with	Advise or inform
Internal	ICT Teams			✓	
	Infrastructure Teams		✓	✓	
	Digital Infrastructure team			✓	
	Other KiwiRail Business Units		✓	✓	
External	Consultants, contractors and suppliers			✓	
	External development teams			✓	
	Infrastructure Supply Chain			✓	
	External Training Providers			✓	

What you will do to contribute

Health Safety and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote safe digital practices in alignment with KiwiRail's health and safety protocols. • Implement safety procedures and ensure team compliance • Analyse workplace risks and develop mitigation strategies • Promote a culture of safety and wellbeing within your team • Respond effectively to safety incidents and near-misses • Support team members' physical and mental health
Customer Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible and effective training for infrastructure teams and supply chain members • Promote collaboration with stakeholders to achieve customer-led strategies • Support a customer-focused culture at KiwiRail • Develop solutions to meet customer requirements • Work with colleagues to improve customer outcomes
High Performing Teams Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster collaboration between cross-functional teams to drive the adoption of digital tools • Empower users through targeted training and support programmes • Foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement. • Build strong relationships to encourage collaboration and teamwork. • Provide timely and constructive feedback • Actively seek diverse perspectives in problem-solving • Identify opportunities for coaching and mentoring
Commercial Acumen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver efficient and scalable solutions in alignment with KiwiRail's strategic goals • Consider financial implications when making recommendations • Understand and comply with procurement guidelines • Work with suppliers to ensure quality outcomes • Recognise how financial decisions impact KiwiRail's overall position
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement cutting-edge practices to enhance KiwiRail's infrastructure business • Drive a culture of continual improvement across the organisation.
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership that promotes a work environment that supports innovation, initiative, ownership of problems, personal accountability, and engagement with KiwiRail's values to ensure the culture is fostered and nurtured to support the wellbeing of all members of the team.

Decision Making

The position is accountable for decisions regarding all product objectives and for the provision of advice to project team members and relevant stakeholders on day to day operational decisions.

Key decision-making requirements of the position include:

- Product management and delivery decisions
- Risk management decisions
- Product resourcing, planning and scheduling decisions

Human Resources Delegations	As per HR Delegation policy
Direct reports	Nil
Finance Delegations	Nil
Budget (operating and capital)	TBC
Travel Delegations	Nil
Statutory powers	Nil

Physical demands and the nature of work

This role is administration-based and requires:

- prolonged sitting and high computer usage
- limited walking, standing, twisting, bending (at the waist), crouching (bend knee)
- carrying of laptop and paperwork when alternating between home and office
- limited lifting of up to 7 kg archive boxes

Your role may include other tasks suited to your level, as your manager directs. This job description shows your current duties. We'll review and update it with you if your responsibilities change.

About you

Knowledge and experience

- You have a tertiary qualification in software engineering, computer science, business management or a related field.
- You bring 2-5 years of experience working with products and agile delivery.
- You have at experience in the infrastructure sector.
- You have strong written and oral communication skills, with an ability to translate technical requirements into practical solutions.
- You demonstrate effective planning, organisational, and problem-solving skills in complex environments.

Ways of working / Work-related qualities

- You communicate effectively across all levels and are skilled at building relationships.
- You are flexible, proactive, and solutions focused.
- You value diversity and foster an inclusive workplace.
- You thrive in collaborative environments and adapt quickly to changing circumstances.
- You are customer-focused and prioritise delivering high-value outcomes.
- You are a natural problem-solver with strong analytical skills.

Other Requirements

- You can pass regular drug and alcohol screenings
- You have a current and valid NZ Driver's Licence
- You are willing to travel to KiwiRail sites as required.

Qualifications

You need either:

- You have certifications or qualifications in software engineering, computer science, business management or related disciplines.

